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**STANDARDIZED EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

**APPROVED COURSE OF INSTRUCTION**

**FIELD COURSE**

# **FIELD & LOCAL GOVERNMENT COORDINATION**

**MODULE 17**

**I-400**

**PARTICIPANT  
REFERENCE  
MANUAL  
2003**

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**PARTICIPANT REFERENCE MANUAL**

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This module describes the interface between field ICS and EOCs in SEMS, as well as the relationship of EOCs with Unified Command, Area Command, and inter-agency coordination. This Module also discusses the basic operational area concept and its relationship to the field and local government levels.

### Objectives:

1. General definition, purpose and scope for Local EOCs and DOCs in California.
2. Relationship of a Local EOC with Unified Command, Area Command, and Inter-Agency Coordination.
3. Field and Local EOC interface and need for government coordination.

## I. Module Content

### A. Overview

The Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) consists of five levels: field, local government, operational area, regional, and state. The field level coordinates with the local government level.

### B. Local EOCs and DOCs in California

#### 1. Role of Local Government in SEMS

Local government is one of the five levels of the Standardized Emergency Management System. The basic role of a local government is to manage and coordinate the overall emergency response and recovery activities within its jurisdiction.

A local government under SEMS is a city, county, city and county, school district, or special district. Special districts under SEMS are units of local government (other than a city, county, or city and county) with authority or responsibility to own, operate or maintain a project (as defined in California Code of Regulations 2900(s) for purposes of natural disaster assistance). This may include a joint powers authority established under section 6500 et seq. of the Code.

Cities generally are responsible for emergency response within their boundaries. Some cities contract for some municipal services from other agencies.

County government is responsible for emergency response in unincorporated areas and for some county government functions countywide. Note that county government staff generally serves as the operational area emergency management staff.

Special districts are primarily responsible in emergencies for maintaining and restoring the services that they normally provide. They may also be responsible for safety of people at their facilities or on their property, and for warning of hazards from their facilities or operations. Some special districts may assist other local governments in the emergency response.

All local governments are responsible for coordinating with other local governments, the field response level and the operational area. Local governments provide Mutual Aid within their capabilities.

#### 2. Local Government Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

An emergency operations center (EOC) is a location from which centralized emergency management can be performed. Local governments should have designated EOCs. The physical size, staffing, and equipping of a local government EOC will depend on the size and complexity of the local government and the emergency operations it is required to manage. The level of EOC staffing will also vary with the specific emergency situation.

A local government's EOC will serve as the central point for:

- Coordination of all the jurisdiction's emergency operations.
- Information gathering and dissemination.
- Coordination with other local governments and the operational area.

SEMS regulations require local governments to provide for five functions: management, operations, planning/intelligence, logistics, and finance/administration. These functions should be the basis for structuring the EOC organization.

Note that the term "management" is used in the EOC rather than "command".

Other local government emergency functions may be placed under the five essential functions.

Figures 17-1 and 17-2 show example EOC organizations for small and large jurisdictions.

The local government EOC is activated when field response agencies need support and to facilitate overall coordination of multi-agency operations.

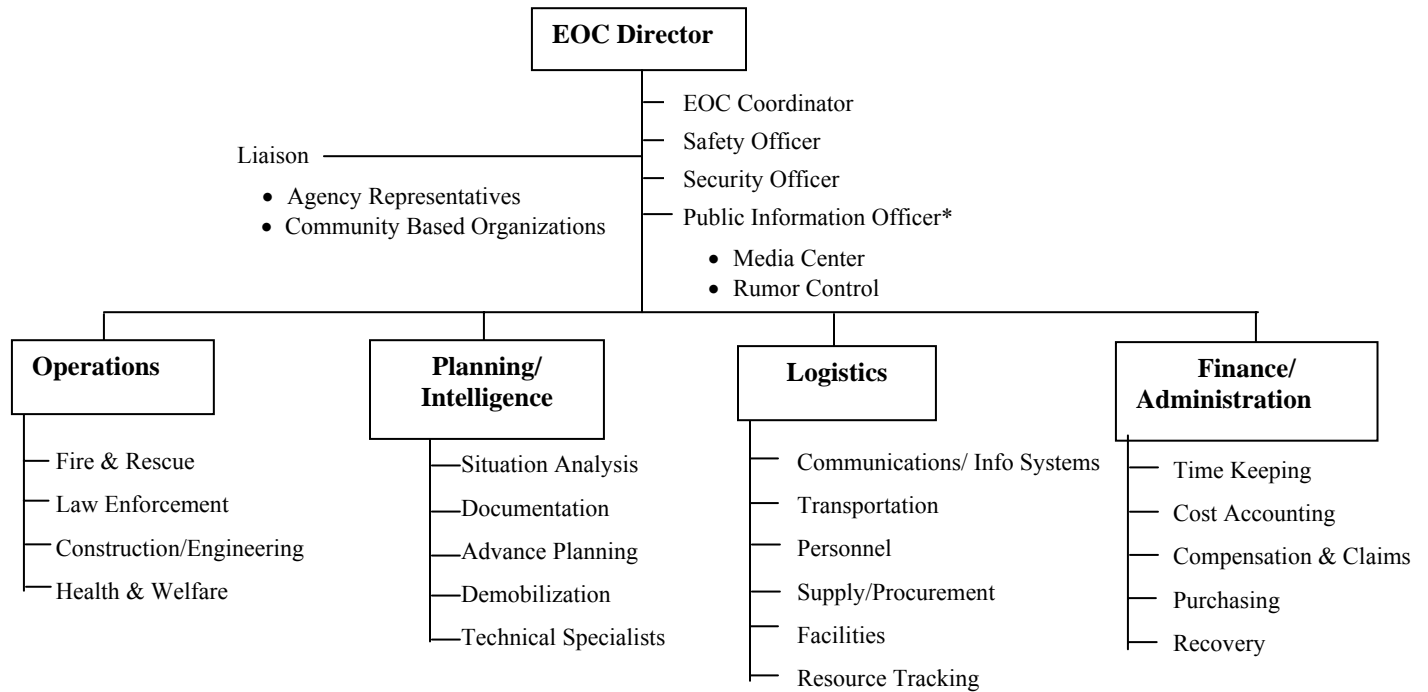
### 3. Department Operations Center (DOC)

A department operations center (DOC) is a facility that may be used by a distinct discipline or agency (such as flood operations, fire, medical, hazardous materials, Department of Public Works or Department of Health).

The DOC is the location from which centralized management of that discipline's or agency's emergency response is performed. DOCs may be used at all SEMS levels above the field level.

DOCs should provide for the five primary SEMS functions of Management, Operations, Planning/Intelligence, Logistics, and Finance/Administration. In a small department, the five functions may be performed by a single person or a very few persons. A very large department may have a highly structured DOC organization with sections, branches and units.

## Small Local Government EOC Functional Organization

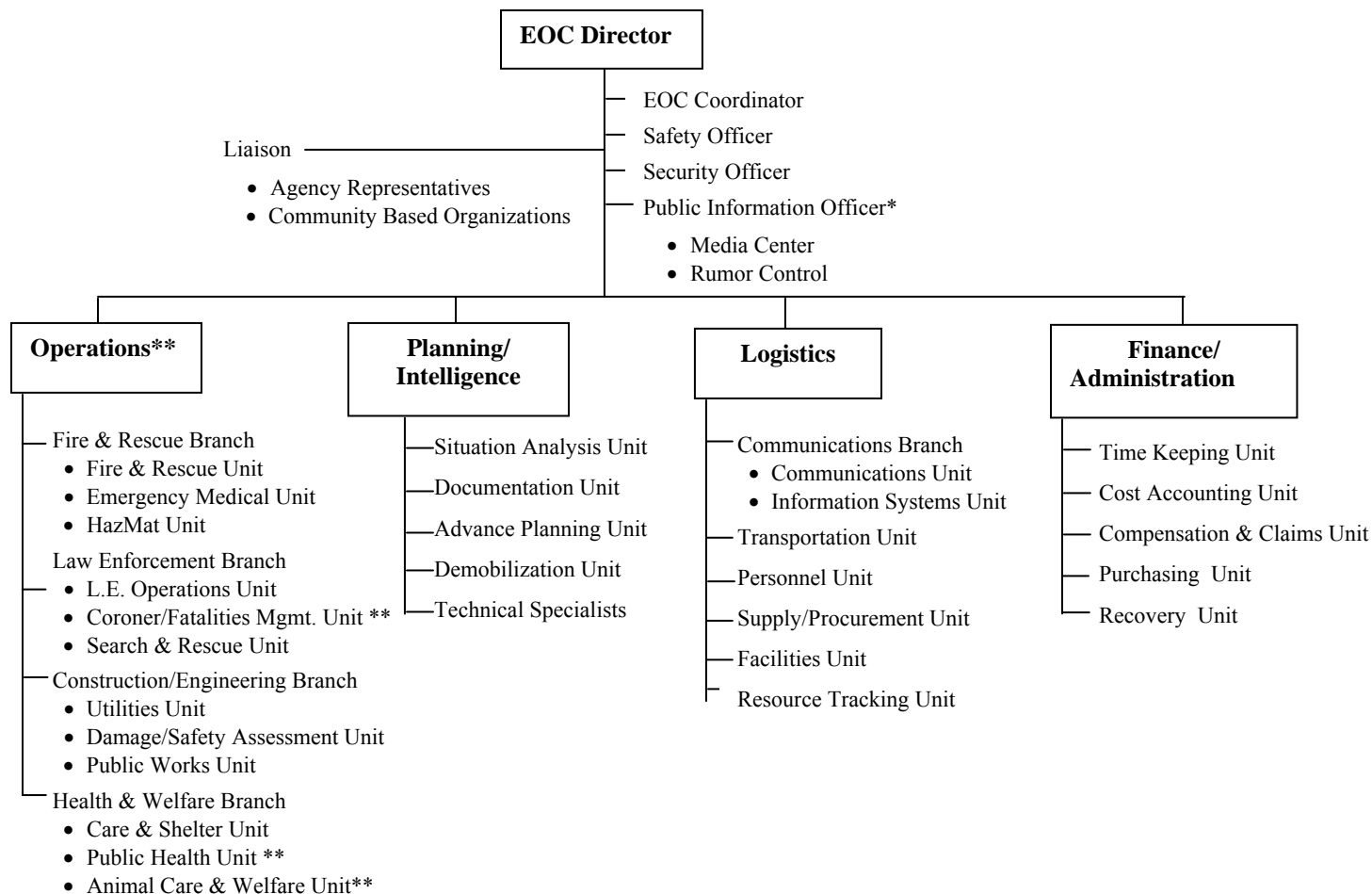


\* Public Information functions may be organized through use of assistant information officers or as units if necessary.

Each jurisdiction must determine the appropriate organization for the functions to be performed.

(Figure 17-1)

## Example Large Local Government EOC Functional Organization



\* Public Information functions may be organized through use of assistant information officers or as units if necessary.

\*\* Normally coordinated by county, but a local coordinator may be designated if needed.

Each jurisdiction must determine the appropriate organization for the functions to be performed.

(Figure 17-2)



## C. Relationship of Local Government EOCs to Unified Command, Area Command, and Inter-agency Coordination

### 1. Comparison of Roles

The following table compares the Incident Command System, Unified Command, Area Command, multi-agency or inter-agency coordination, and EOCs.

<b>Incident Command System (ICS)</b>	<b>Unified Command (UC)</b>	<b>Area Command Unified Area Command (AC)</b>	<b>Inter-Agency Coordination Groups (IACG)</b>	<b>Emergency Operations Center (EOC)</b>
The management system used to direct all incident operations. The Incident Commander is located at an Incident Command Post at the incident site.	An application of ICS used when there is more than one agency with incident jurisdiction. Agencies work together through their designated Incident Commanders at a single Incident Command Post to establish a common set of objectives and strategies, and a single Incident Action Plan.	Established as necessary to provide command authority and coordination for two or more incidents in close proximity. Area Command works directly with Incident Commanders. Area Command becomes Unified Area Command when incidents are multi-jurisdictional. Area Command may be established at an EOC facility or at some other location other than an Incident Command Post.	Often used as an ad-hoc activity to coordinate support between agencies or jurisdictions on specific issues. IACGs are normally established within EOCs but may be located at other facilities. Interagency coordination is an integral part of ICS and EOC operations at all SEMS levels.	EOCs are used in varying ways at all levels of government and within private industry to provide coordination, direction, and control during emergencies. Also called Expanded Dispatch, Emergency Command and Control Centers, etc. An EOC at a department level is called a DOC.

(Figure 17-3)

Local government EOCs primarily perform a coordination role in emergencies. Unified Commands and Area Commands have command authority over incidents. Coordination should be established between local government EOCs and Unified Commands or Area Commands for incidents within the local government's jurisdictional boundaries.

Local governments use inter-agency coordination within their jurisdiction as the following describes. Local government representatives may also participate in an inter-agency coordination group established to coordinate resources and support among local governments and other agencies.

## 2. Inter-Agency Coordination at the Local Government Level

### a. Inter-agency Coordination in the EOC

Inter-agency coordination is an integral part of the functioning of a local government EOC. The EOC is staffed by representatives from the local government's departments and agencies who work together at the EOC to coordinate the local government's emergency response. Representatives from outside agencies including special districts, volunteer agencies and private organizations may also participate at the EOC with departmental representatives in coordinating the local government response effort. Coordination with agencies not represented in the EOC may be accomplished through telecommunications.

Involvement of the local government's departmental representatives and appropriate outside agency representatives in the incident action planning process at the EOC is essential for effective emergency management and provides an important focus for inter-agency coordination. The EOC Director or General Staff may also convene meetings for inter-agency coordination purposes as needed.

### b. Establishing an Inter-agency Coordination Group

In some situations, a local government may formally establish an inter-agency coordination group to develop consensus on priorities, resource allocation and response strategies. A formal inter-agency coordination group can be especially useful when a particular response problem or issue requires coordination with numerous agencies not usually represented in the local government's EOC. Such a group may be established through a temporary ad hoc arrangement during an emergency or may be developed through pre-event planning for certain contingencies as a part of the jurisdiction's emergency management organization.

A local government level inter-agency coordination group may function within the EOC or at another location. An inter-agency coordination group may also function through conference calls. Whether physically at the EOC or at another location, the inter-agency coordinating group should remain connected to the local government EOC, and perform as an extension of an established EOC function.

Priorities and objectives developed through a local government level inter-agency coordination group should be reflected in the EOC incident action plan as appropriate. Implementation of objectives agreed upon by the group should be coordinated through the EOC.

Local government representatives may participate with other local governments and other agencies in an inter-agency coordination group organized by another local government, operational area or regional level.

In some situations, discipline-specific mutual aid systems may establish an Inter-agency coordination group at off-incident sites. The Inter-agency coordination group should establish communications and coordination with activated EOCs.

## D. Coordination Between the Field Response Level and Local Government

This section describes the field-local coordination requirements, provides examples of field to local government linkages for various situations, and then discusses the interactions between functions for field to DOC, DOC to EOC, and field to EOC coordination.

### 1. Coordination Requirements

Coordination among SEMS levels is clearly necessary for effective emergency response. When a local government EOC is activated, SEMS regulations require that coordination and communications be established with Incident Commanders, either

- a) through department operations centers to the EOC, or
- b) between Incident Commanders and the EOC.

SEMS regulations also require that coordination and communications be established between the local government EOC when activated, and any state or local emergency response agency having jurisdiction at an incident within the local government's boundaries.

### 2. Field to Local Government Level Linkages

ICS field response organizations will normally communicate with DOCs or EOCs through dispatch centers. Dispatch centers do not have command authority over incidents; they have dispatch authority as determined by agency or jurisdiction policy. Because of the communications systems involved, agency dispatch centers often function in an intermediate role between Incident Commanders in the field and DOCs or EOCs. Also, in some cases under heavy load conditions, agencies may elect to move into an "expanded dispatch" mode which may provide a higher level authority at the agency dispatch facility.

Dispatch centers may be departmental or may be centralized within the jurisdiction. Some jurisdictions have the capability to go from departmental dispatching to centralized dispatching when the local government EOC is activated. The jurisdiction's dispatching arrangements and communication capability along with local policies will affect how the field level is linked to the local government level.

In many jurisdictions, the ICS field response organizations will be primarily linked (through a dispatch center) to the DOC of the agency that has jurisdiction over the incident. In these cases, DOCs have agency level authority over their assigned Incident Commanders. The DOC is responsible for coordinating with the local government EOC.

In some jurisdictions, ICS field response organizations may have direct communications with and/or receive policy direction from the local government EOC when it is activated.

Whether this occurs will depend upon the size and policy of the jurisdiction, and lines of communication that are available.

### 3. Field to Local Government Coordination with Unified Command

At the SEMS Field Response level, Unified Command may be established for some multi-jurisdictional incidents. Unified Command may be used when more than one agency has some significant jurisdiction over that incident. Under Unified Command each agency with significant jurisdictional responsibility will assign an Incident Commander and appropriate resources to the incident. (Unified Command is covered in Module 13.)

The Incident Commanders form a Unified Command, and work from a single Incident Command Post. They develop a set of common objectives, strategies, and a single Incident Action Plan. They select an Operations Section Chief for the incident from one of the jurisdictions or agencies and give that Operations Section Chief authority to implement the operations portion of the incident action plan and to command tactical resources.

Incident interactions with dispatch centers, DOCs, or an EOC will generally take two forms under Unified Command:

- Policy and Authority Interactions
- Resource Ordering Interactions

#### Policy and Authority Interactions

Under Unified Command, the Incident Commanders will maintain communications with their respective department or agency. Each Incident Commander will receive an appropriate delegation of authority to govern that agencies interactions at the incident.

#### Resource Ordering Interactions

Resource Ordering under a Unified Command will be determined based on the policies of the agencies and disciplines involved, and the resource requirements of the incident.

Single point resource ordering from the incident takes place when all orders are placed from the incident to a single agency dispatch center, DOC, or an EOC. This is a preferred method, because logistics staff at the incident do not have to determine which agencies are responsible for ordering which resources. The selected agency for receiving the order could be the one with the greatest resource involvement or the closest to the incident.

Multi-point ordering is also used under Unified Command. In this method, each agency essentially orders the resources for which it has responsibility, after the overall resource requirements are determined as part of the Incident Action Planning process.

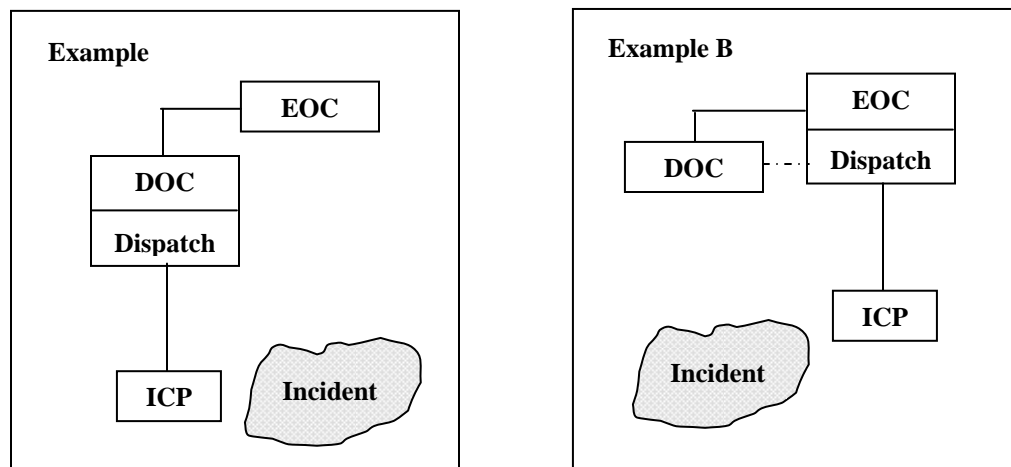
#### 4. Example Field - DOC/EOC Linkages

##### a. Single Jurisdiction-Single Discipline Incident Situation

For a single discipline incident, the Incident Commander may be in contact with the dispatch center for the jurisdictional authority. If the incident is large with a need for many resources, a department operations center (DOC) may be activated. The Incident Commander would report to the DOC typically through the agency dispatch center.

The local government EOC may be activated for large or complex incidents. The Incident Commander may report to the DOC or directly into the EOC.

Local policies, communications systems, and the nature of the incident will determine the appropriate reporting channels. Where there are departmental dispatch centers, the Incident Commander will most likely report to a DOC. Where there are central dispatch centers in collocated with the EOC facility, the Incident Commander may report directly to the EOC.

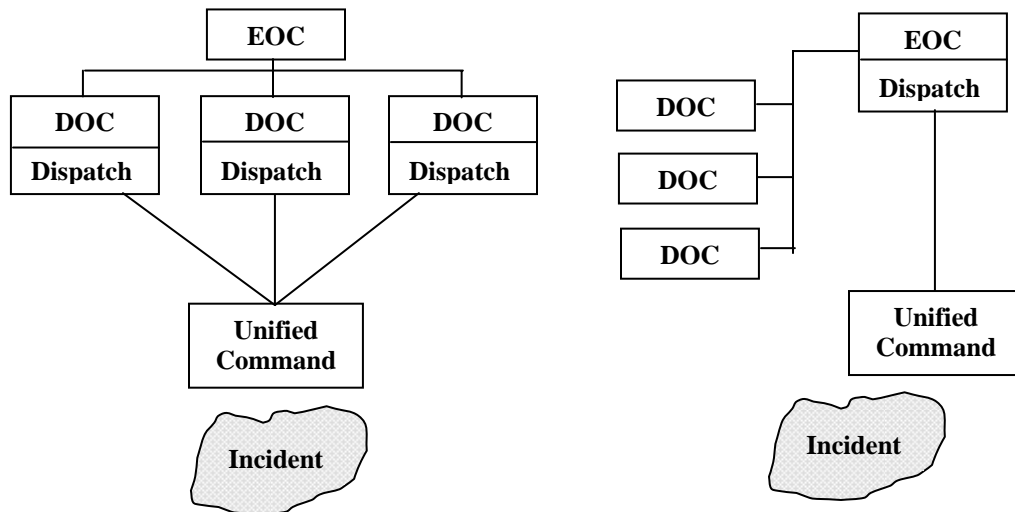


(Figure 17-4)

##### b. Single Jurisdiction-Unified Command Situation

Unified Command may be established for a major multi-disciplinary incident within a jurisdiction. The members of the Unified Command may report to their respective DOCs through dispatch centers.

When the local government EOC is activated, the members of the Unified Command may continue reporting to their respective DOCs or may coordinate directly with the EOC depending on jurisdiction policy and communications systems (Example A). For direct field- EOC coordination, the members of the Unified Command and their department contacts at the EOC may designate a single primary line of communications (Example B).



(Figure 17-5)

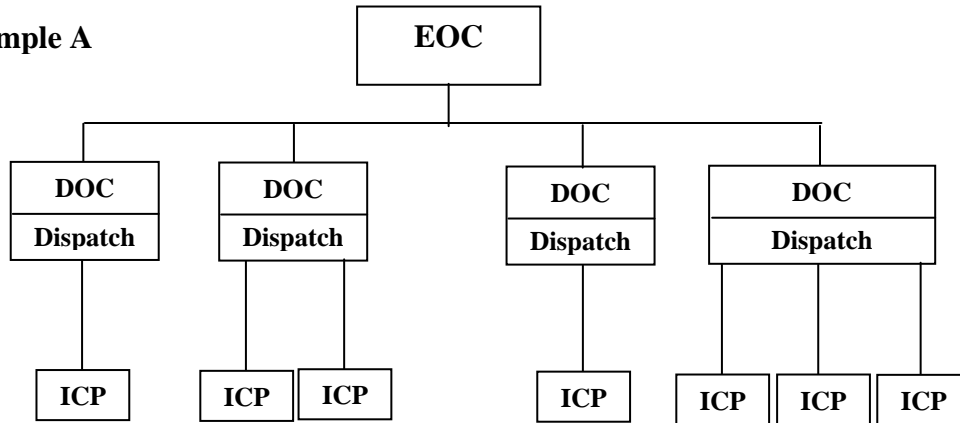
c. Single Jurisdiction-Major Disaster Situation

In a major area-wide disaster, such as a major earthquake, there may be multiple incidents of various types within a single jurisdiction. Some incidents may be single discipline incidents, others may be multi-disciplinary incidents operating under Unified Command. The local government EOC may be activated to coordinate the overall response, while the Incident Command System is used by field responders.

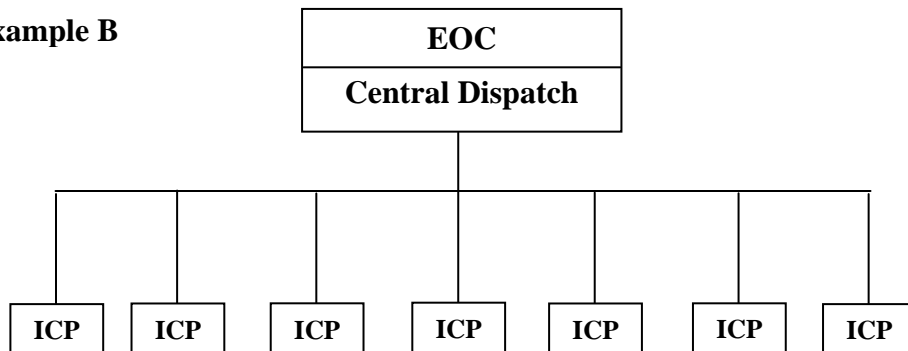
Incident Commanders may be linked through dispatch centers to DOCs which in turn will coordinate with the EOC. Alternatively, in some jurisdictions direct coordination and communications may be established between Incident Commanders and the EOC. Figure 17-6 illustrates field-EOC reporting relationships in major disasters. For simplicity, the diagrams show only single discipline incidents. Unified Commands may be linked to department operations centers or EOCs as described previously.

## Field to Local Government Coordination and Communications In a Major Area Wide Disaster

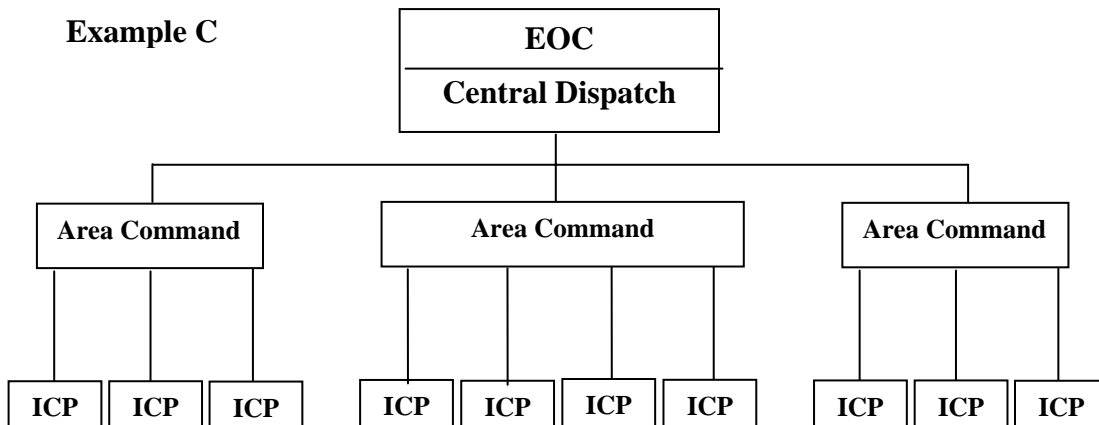
**Example A**



**Example B**



**Example C**



*(Figure 17-6)*

When the EOC is directly overseeing Incident Command teams, the EOC is operating in a centralized management mode. The EOC will be establishing priorities among

incidents and allocating resources according to those priorities. The relationship of the EOC to the field organization in this case is somewhat similar to that of an Area Command; however, the EOC has a much broader scope of responsibility and a larger management organization than an Area Command.

It is also possible in a large city or county for Area Commands to be established between the Incident Command teams and the EOC. During a major jurisdiction-wide disaster, the jurisdiction may be divided into areas, with an Area Command overseeing the Incident Command teams within each area. The Area Commands would receive policy direction from the EOC.

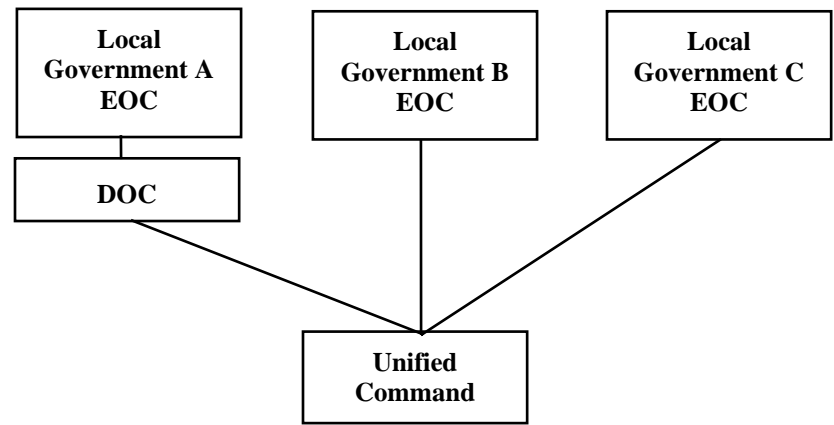
d. Multi-jurisdiction Coordination

Figure 17-7 reflects examples when an incident crosses multiple jurisdictions, coordination needs to be established with all the affected jurisdictions. In a Unified Command, the jurisdictional representatives would coordinate with their jurisdictions through a DOC or an EOC.

The occurrence of several similar type incidents located in close proximity but in different jurisdictions, may result in EOC-Area Command interactions. A Unified Area Command may be established to oversee Incident Commands operating in general proximity to each other. The Unified Area Command would coordinate with activated local government EOCs.

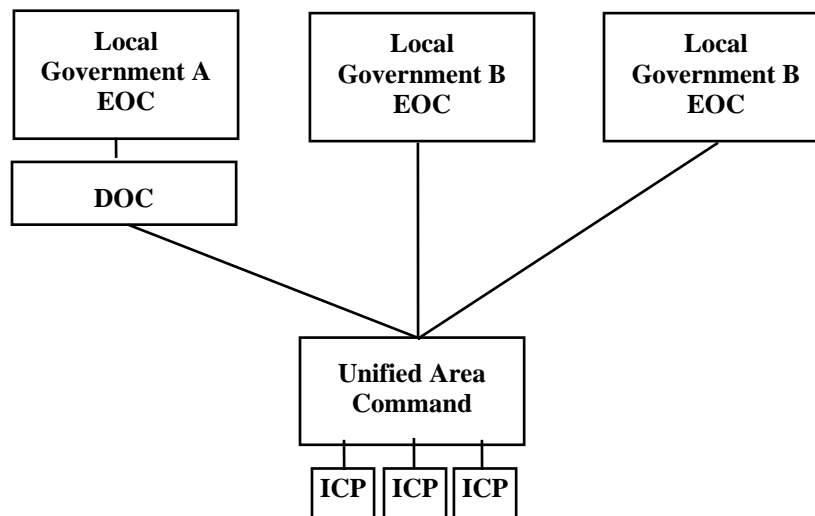
**Multi-jurisdictional Incident Coordination**

**Example 1**  
**Multi-jurisdiction Incident with Unified Command**



**Example 2**  
**Multiple Incidents with Unified Area Command**





(Figure 17-7)

## 5. Functional Interactions

### a. Field-Department Operations Center (DOC) Interactions

Interactions between the incident and the department operations center (DOC) will generally occur on a function to function basis. The Incident Commander will report to the individual having DOC management responsibility. Other incident functions may coordinate with their counterpart function in the DOC. The Incident Planning/Intelligence Section may exchange information with DOC Planning/Intelligence Section. The DOC Logistics Section may coordinate resource orders received from the Incident Logistics Section.

It should be noted that in some DOCs, all of the SEMS functions may be performed by only one or a few individuals. This may be sufficient to support small incidents. For larger incidents, the DOC staffing may need to expand. If the department cannot provide additional personnel to expand the DOC organization sufficiently, it should shift responsibility and staff to the emergency operations center (EOC).

Resource ordering from the incident may be single or multi-point as described in Module 9.

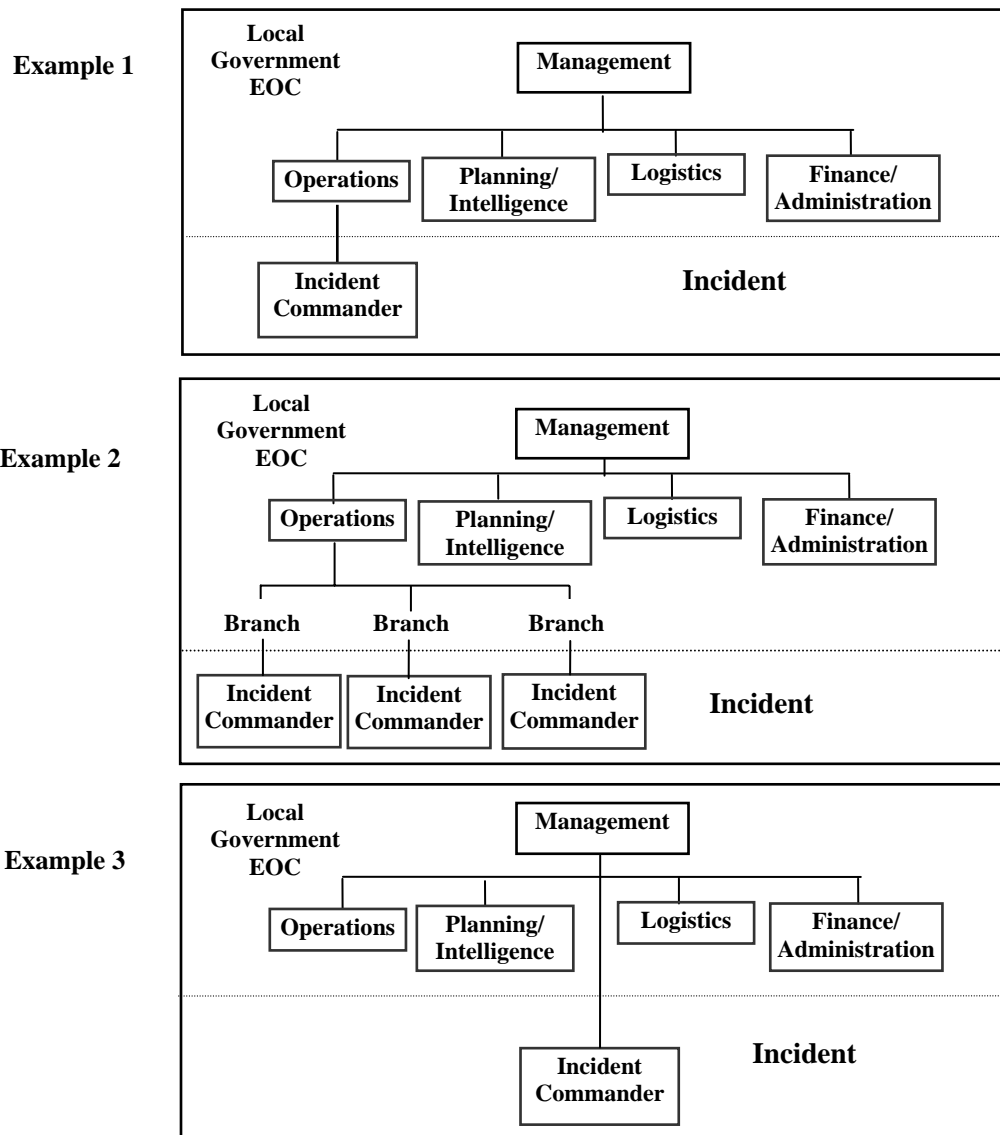
### b. DOC-EOC Interactions

DOCs will coordinate with the local government EOC when it is activated. The primary interaction will be between DOC Management and their departmental contact in the EOC. Their departmental contact will most likely be in a branch of the EOC Operations Section. Additional secondary interactions may occur between other DOC functions and the EOC, but should be coordinated with DOC management.

c. Field-Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Interactions

In some jurisdictions, direct coordination and communications is established between Incident Commanders and the EOC. The lines of coordination and communications in such jurisdictions may vary depending on the jurisdiction and situation. Figure 17-8 illustrates alternative lines of Incident Commander to EOC interactions when direct coordination and communications is established. The following describes this briefly.

### Incident Commander-Local Government EOC Primary Interaction



(Figure 17-8)

The Incident Commander will most likely interact primarily with the EOC Operations Section when there is direct coordination and communications. The Incident

Commander will normally report to a senior official from the Incident Commander's department or agency.

In single incident situations, the Incident Commander may interact directly with the EOC Operations Section Coordinator.

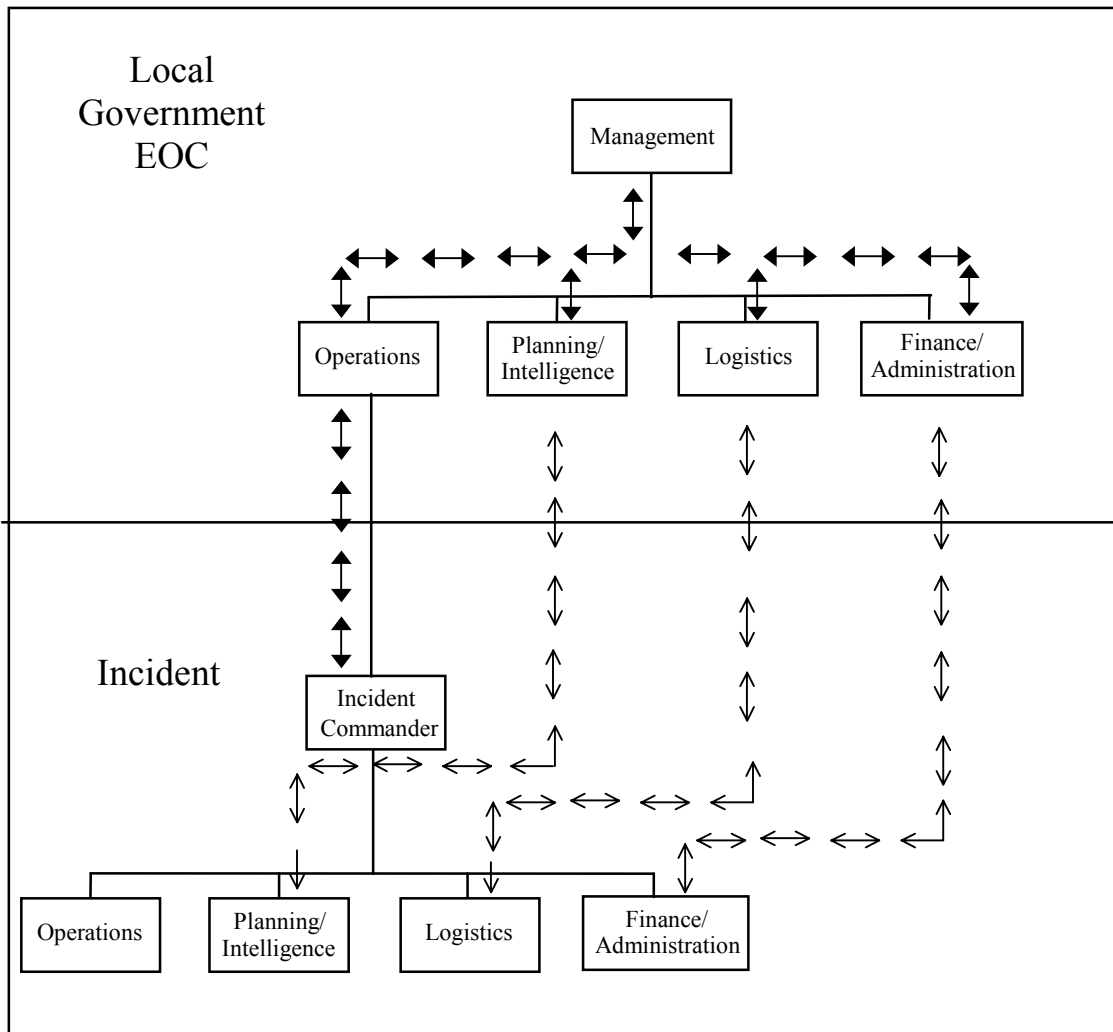
In major disasters, where there are multiple incidents within the jurisdiction, Incident Commanders will normally interact with branches of the EOC Operations Section.

In some jurisdictions, local policies may provide for direct Incident Commander to EOC Management interaction. This may occur when there is a single large incident that has a major impact on the community. Direct Incident Commander to EOC Management interaction would not be advisable in major disasters where there are multiple incidents as this would typically exceed the span of control of EOC Management.

In most cases where there is direct coordination and communications from the field to the EOC, the primary flow of coordination and information will be between the Incident Commander and the EOC Operations Section, either to the Section Coordinator or to a branch. The EOC Operations Section will be responsible for interacting with EOC Management and other EOC elements as illustrated in Figure 17-9. Additionally, it may be useful in some situations to have direct coordination between incident sections and their counterpart EOC section. For example, the Incident Planning/Intelligence Section may provide information directly to the EOC Planning/Intelligence Section.

Under Unified Command the situation is somewhat more complex, but field to EOC interactions will generally be similar to those described above. Coordination may be facilitated if the members of the Unified Command and their department contacts at the EOC determine a single primary line of communications for field-EOC coordination. The primary contact in the EOC would then be the Operations Section Coordinator or one of the branches in the operations section depending on the circumstances, or in some cases the EOC Management. One of the members of the Unified Command may serve as the primary field contact. The primary contacts would be responsible for coordinating with their counterparts at the incident or within the EOC. Secondary interactions may still occur between other members of the Unified Command and their departmental contacts at the EOC. Resource ordering may be single or multi-point.

## Incident Command System-Local Government EOC Functional Interactions



↔ ↔ Primary Field - EOC Coordination and Information Flow  
 ↔ ↔ Lines of secondary communications and coordination  
 — Lines of Management Authority

(Figure 17-9)